

Stem Cell Institute Solicits First Facilities Grant Proposals: \$48.5 million available for new research laboratories in California

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SAN FRANCISCO, January 18, 2007 - The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) announced today that oral arguments in the litigation challenging the Constitutionality of the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act (Proposition 71) have been set by the Court of Appeal (First District) for Wednesday, February 14, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. (Pacific) (Civic Center, 350 McAllister Street in San Francisco).

The Shared Research Laboratory Grant Program will fund dedicated laboratory space for the culture of human embryonic stem cells (hESCs), particularly those that fall outside federal guidelines. (Current federal policy prohibits research involving hESCs isolated after August 2001 from being conducted in laboratories constructed with any federal funding.) CIRM's grants will support the development of core laboratories to be used by multiple investigators and shared by multiple institutions, and provide an environment for the unrestricted conduct of scientific research on hESCs.

The grants will provide funds for the design and renovation of laboratory space, equipment for the new research facilities, and operating expenses for three years. Some grants will include additional funds to train scientists and technical staff in the growth and maintenance of hESCs.

The program is part of the CIRM research grant initiative, *Innovation in Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research*, which is intended to advance human embryonic stem cell research in California. The initiative was approved by the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), CIRM's governing board, this past August, following California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's authorization of a \$150 million General Fund loan to the Institute.

"The ICOC funded grants to train 169 stem cell scientists last year and will award more than \$100 million in research grants this February and March," said Richard Keller, the Institute's Senior Officer for Scientific and Medical Research Facilities. "Shared Research Laboratory Grants will ensure that scientists have the physical facilities they need to cultivate new lines of embryonic stem cells, without running afoul of federal restrictions and without endangering federal funding for other research activities."

CIRM expects applicant institutions to provide at least a 20 percent match of the total cost for renovation and equipment. They may request up to \$2 million for laboratory space development and an additional \$500,000 if they plan to offer a stem cell techniques training course. The RFA is open to all academic and non-profit research institutions in California.

The Request for Applications (RFA) for shared facilities grants is available here. Potential applicants must submit letters of intent to CIRM by February 2, 2007. Full applications will be submitted in two parts. The first part will describe the scientific mission of the proposed facility and is due February 23rd; the second part will detail renovation and/or development of the laboratory space (including fixed equipment costs), and is due on March 16th.

CIRM's Scientific and Medical Research Funding Working Group will evaluate the scientific merit of each application, followed by a review of the laboratory construction components by its Scientific and Medical Facilities Working Group. The Working Groups will make funding recommendations to the ICOC, which has final authority to award all CIRM grants.

About CIRM

Governed by the ICOC, CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was approved by California voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. For more information, please visit <http://www.cirm.ca.gov>.

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